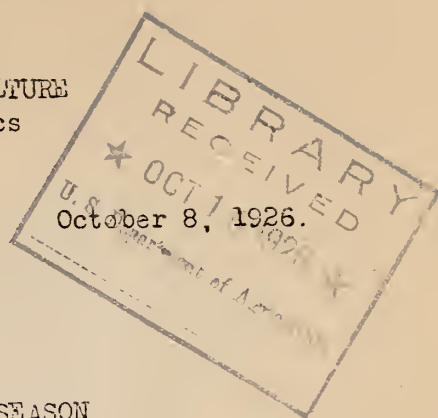


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FOREIGN NEWS ON APPLES

THE BRITISH APPLE MARKET'S BRIGHT SEASON

September has been one of the brightest months of the year for many in the British fruit trade. The only unfavorable aspects of the trade have been the small turnover and the excessively high prices charged the British consuming public. However, after twelve months of unceasing grief it is refreshing to most traders to have the market cleared up of over-supplies and deteriorated fruit, and to again feel the pulse of brisk demand.

American apple growers, especially those of Virginia and Massachusetts, have profited by this brief period of short supplies. Usually the month of September witnesses the British market loaded to overflowing with English apples and Continental fruit, but this year has been more of an exception than was anticipated. Even Worcestershire, a county of apple trees since the seventeenth century, has been buying imported apples at the port markets for home consumption. Canadian apples only began to arrive at the end of the month, California Gravensteins were nearly all cleaned up in August, while no appreciable quantities of Pacific Northwest apples have arrived until the last week of September.

Virginia York Imperials have been a little slower arriving in Great Britain than in 1925, but the greatest difference is noticeable in Washington Jonathans which make up the first shipments of volume from the Northwest. These are fully a week behind the schedule of last year. Most of the York Imperials received during the month of September have been green and immature, showing very little color and not having good eating quality. However, the scarcity of English apples has caused them to be absorbed at good prices. This, no doubt, will adversely affect the later demand for good apples.

High Retail Prices.

High retail prices, which are illustrated by charges of from 16¢ to 20¢ per pound for apples that are fit only for cooking purposes, have certainly checked consumption. It will not be until about October 20th to 30th, after the market has been thoroughly filled up with apples from all sources, that retail prices will fall to the point of inducing consumption in important quantities.

All fruits are expensive for the British consumer this year, - small sized oranges at from 6¢ to 8¢ each; grapes at from 25¢ to \$1.00 per pound; and pears at from 8¢ to 15¢ each certainly give a feeling of dismay to the man with the thin pocket book. And with 1,600,000 on the Government dole, it is apparent that the purchasing power of the British workmen is restricted.

Unwise Bartlett Pear Shipments.

We witness many foolish operations in consigning fruit from American orchards, - the shipping of high priced early apples, such as the Bonum, Jonathan, King David and Delicious in box cars, - common stowage; the inclusion of $1\frac{3}{4}$ " apples in so-called 2" minimum packs; and poor racking, pressing on the use of cheap barrels as is evidenced by no end of slacks, - all of which cries out "depreciation, depreciation, depreciation" at every auction. But an old standby that pages the foolkiller year after year is the shipment of New York State Bartlett pears in barrels. Early in the season, when the pears are green and hard and when there are few warm apples in the refrigerators, a consignment or two will come through in good shape and sell for \$12.00 or \$14.00 per barrel. Then they keep on shipping them till the bitter end, with only stems, seeds and a great deal of juice arriving on this side. Who pays the freight on this sort of folly I have not been able to determine, nor how many years it is to continue I cannot guess, but two things are certain, - the barrel is not a suitable package for Bartlett pears and unless pre-cooling and cold storage are used, their exportation should be risked only during the early part of the season with fruit that is not over-mature. I have also noticed the arrival of Californian and Washington d'Anjou pears yellow-ripe the third week in September. This variety should not be in this condition till the middle of November if properly handled.

The Coal Strike and Our Fall Markets.

There is no bright ray of hope at this date (September 24) for a quick settlement. Foreign coal continues to pour in by the shipload to meet all immediate needs and the miners are receiving hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling from various sources to keep bodies and souls together. It would seem possible that the strike may be broken by attrition, as each week several thousands more miners are reported by the press to have gone back to work. The influence on industry is severe. The monthly production of steel is only between 10% and 15% of what it was last year. Most payrolls the country over are going on, however, and people must eat and travel and be amused, even though coal laborers, steel workers and others are on a mere stipend. Our British markets are evidencing a briskness at present, but normal quantities will not be absorbed unless very low prices are maintained throughout the season, - much lower than those in evidence thus far.

Owing to a shortage of home grown apples, the British market may show surprising strength for a couple of weeks in October, but there is little confidence to be placed in its ability to absorb a continuation of heavy quantities. As soon as the retailers' bins are properly filled up and the jobber has a week's supply ahead, the exporter should make consignments with caution, - slowing up if shipments are heavy.

The coal strike has had a stimulating effect on shipping. Industry in Holland, Belgium and Germany is also given a temporary impetus by new outside orders for coal and other supplies. We may expect the Continental demand for apples to start six weeks earlier than usual and to take increased amounts.

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